PEN AND INK COMICS

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Wandering Star

Book Six

Book Six (of Twelve)

by Teri S. Wood

Let's see, coffee? And a Diet Coke. Okay, I'm ready.

Book Six . . . I'm writing the editorial for Book Six! I gotta tell ya, it's a little mind-boggling. I mean, soon I'm going to have six WANDERING STARs on my wall: six books that represent the most stressed out, overworked, financially devastating year of my adult life.

Yep. I wouldn't trade them for the world.

There have been TIMES, though. I'd be sitting there, at my drawing table, late at night, like all the nights before, and suddenly, I'd snarl to myself, "I have no life! I HAVE NO LIFE!!! All I have is stupid, bloody comic pages!!! Aaaarrrrrrrggghh!!!" But, it always seemed that the next day I'd find a letter in my Post Office Box telling me how wonderful WANDERING STAR was, and, well, being the sucker for flattery that I am, I'd shuffle back to my drawing table to do some more pretty pictures.

Anyway, onward to other stuff. I got good news and bad news. The good news is Book Three has sold out. The bad news is reprinting costs have wiped me out financially, and I've had to cancel my trip to the CAPITAL CITY CONFERENCE. (#$@!) The costs for airfare to Missouri, a hotel room, food, etc. was just too expensive for me. I promise to do my darndest to make it next year.

I will be going to the Alternative Press Expo (see ad in back pages of this book), and to San Diego Comic con and Expo. I have two things going for me on these trips: one is both are held in California, and if worse came to worse, I can always DRIVE there. And second, I happen to have friends and family in both areas, so I can always be "Teri, the free-loading low-life" in an emergency. (Ah, the glamorous life of the comic-book creator.)

As for the GREAT WANDERING STAR TOUR OF 1994 . . . the stores and I, we're working on it. I've talked to a lot of people who are interested, but most of the stores are . . . far, far away. Siiiggghhh. Hopefully I'll have something concrete by the time Book Seven hits the stands.

Oh, hey! In case ya haven't caught on yet, yeah, I survived the Great California Quake. El Centro's just a little too far south, so's all we got was a little rumble. And, uh, I slept through it. Sorry.

Hey, if you ever find yourself wondering what comics a little over-worked self-publisher like myself reads when I'm not chained to the drawing board, I present . . .

TERI S. WOOD'S
WONDER-FUN COMIC LIST!!!!
(or comics I will even spend my own hard-earned cash money on.)

. . . . . .

1. **SANDMAN:** DC/Vertigo
   Written by the far too-talented Neil Gaiman. (Should be in just about ANY comic shop.)
2. **CEREBUS:** Aardvark-Vanaheim. (Box 1674, Station C., Kitchener, Ontario, Canada N2G 4R2.)
   Created by Dave (300 Issues, Man!) Sim, with unbelievable backgrounds by Gerhard.
3. **BONE:** Cartoon Books. (Box 1538, Los Gatos, CA 95031-1583.)
   Created by Jeff Smith. But, doesn't EVERYBODY know that now?
4. **HEPCATS:** Double Diamond Press. (Box 27157, Austin, TX 78755-2157.)
   Created by Martin (Attack of the Killer Self-Publishers) Wagner. If you haven't heard of him. You will. (Da-da-da-dum!)
5. **A DISTANT SOIL:** Aria Press. (12638-28, Suite 173, Newport News, VA 23602-4316.)

Continued in the back . . .

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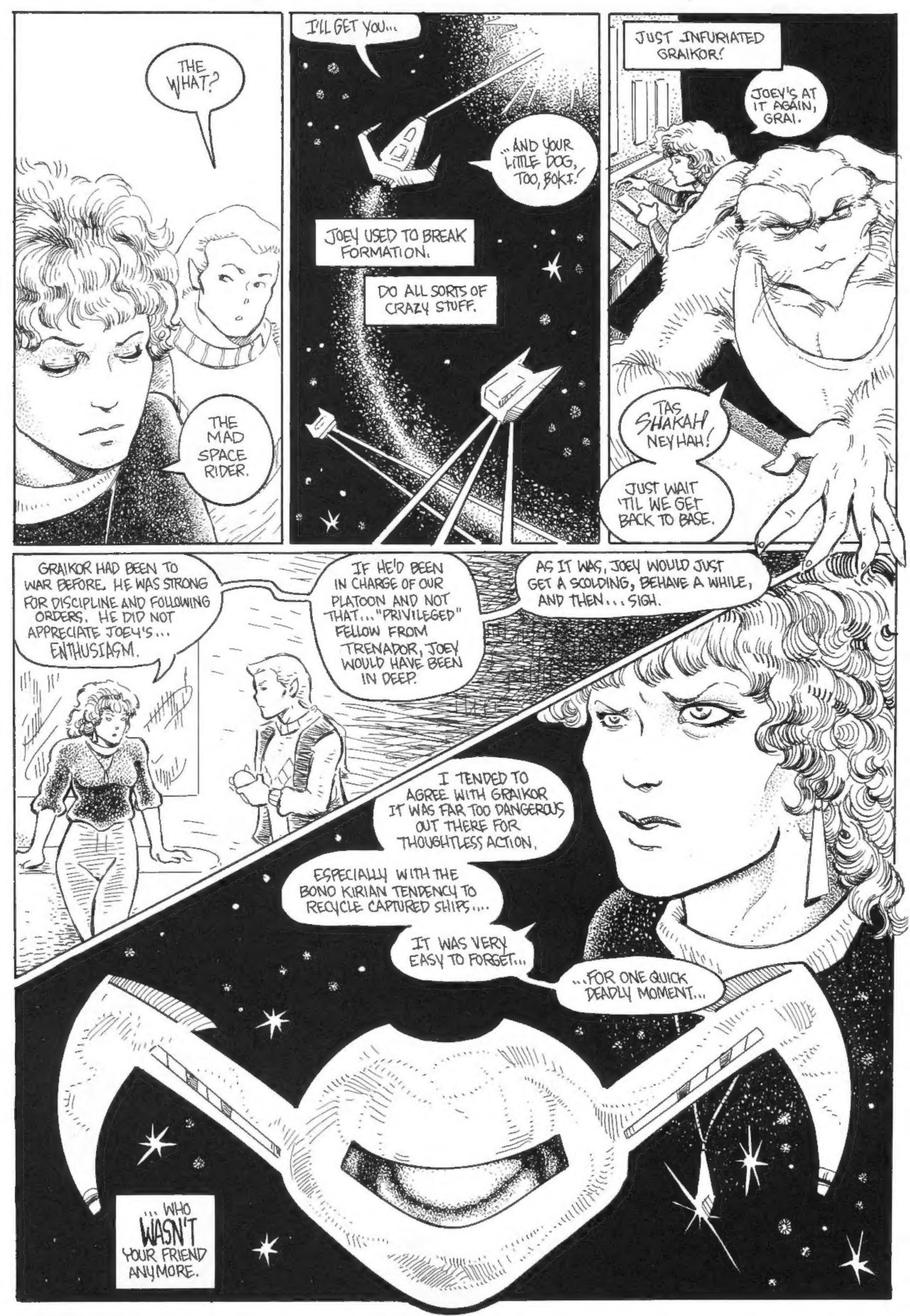
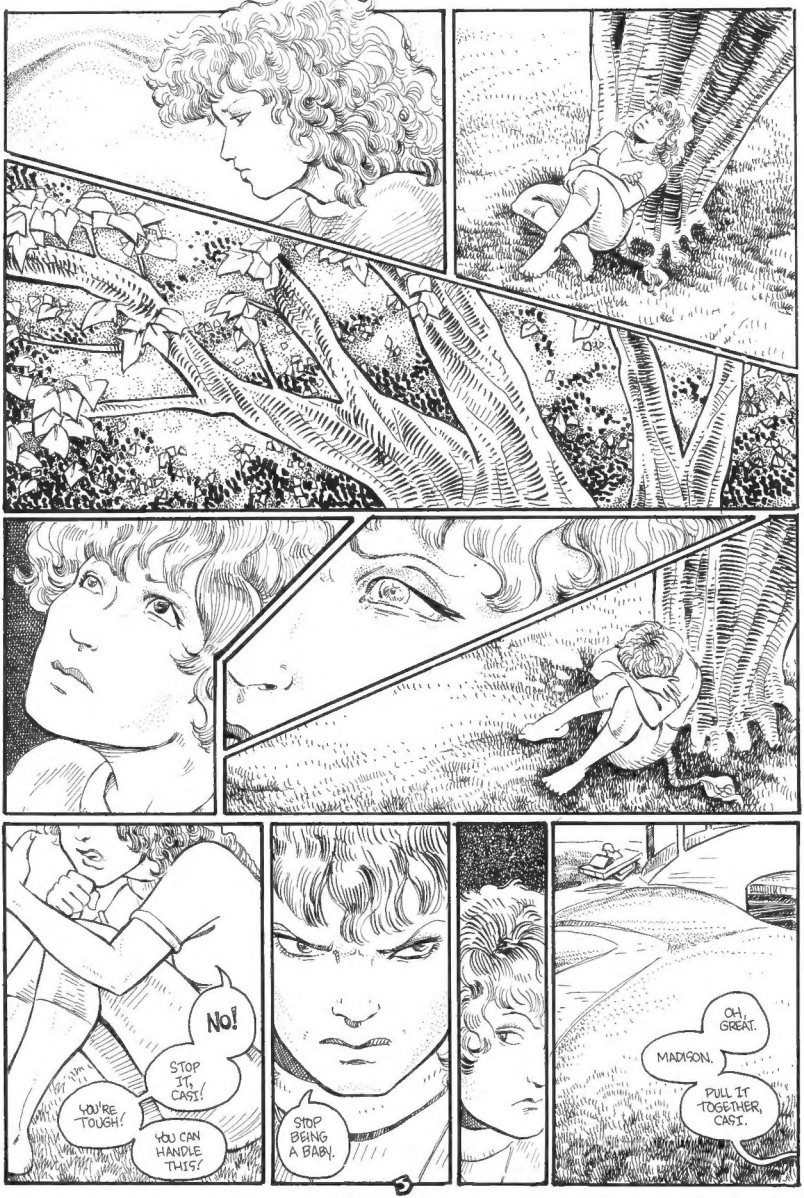
SECOND PRINTING May 1994

DOESN'T LOOK LIKE THIS RAIN IS GOING TO SLOW DOWN ANY TIME SOON.
UM...
...MS. CAGANDRA?
THIS PICTURE...?
IS THIS YOUR FRIEND JOEY?
YEAH, THAT'S HIM.
THE MAD SPACE RIDER!


THE WHAT?
THE MAD SPACE RIDER.
I'LL GET YOU...
...AND YOUR LITTLE DOG, TOO, BOKI!
JOEY USED TO BREAK FORMATION.
DO ALL SORTS OF CRAZY STUFF.
JUST INFURIATED GRAIKOR!
JOEY'S AT IT AGAIN, GRAI.
TAS SHAKAH NEYHAH!
JUST WAIT 'TIL WE GET BACK TO BASE.
GRAIKOR HAD BEEN TO WAR BEFORE. HE WAS STRONG FOR DISCIPLINE AND FOLLOWING ORDERS. HE DID NOT APPRECIATE JOEY'S... ENTHUSIASM.
IF HE'D BEEN IN CHARGE OF OUR PLATOON AND NOT THAT..."PRIVILEGED" FELLOW FROM TRENADOR, JOEY WOULD HAVE BEEN IN DEEP.
AS IT WAS, JOEY WOULD JUST GET A SCOLDING, BEHAVE A WHILE, AND THEN... SIGH.
I TENDED TO AGREE WITH GRAIKOR IT WAS FAR TOO DANGEROUS OUT THERE FOR THOUGHTLESS ACTION.
ESPECIALLY WITH THE BONO KIRIAN TENDENCY TO RECYCLE CAPTURED SHIPS....
IT WAS VERY EASY TO FORGET...
...FOR ONE QUICK DEADLY MOMENT...
... WHO WASN'T YOUR FRIEND ANYMORE.

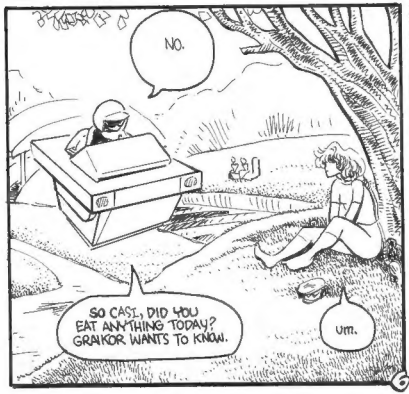
THAT MUST HAVE BEEN TERRIFYING!
CARPE
MM.
AND...
...ON TOP OF ALL THAT...
...THERE WAS EARTH.
THAT MUST HAVE BEEN A LOT FOR A YOUNG GIRL TO DEAL WITH.
YES.
"IT WAS."


YOU'RE TOUGH!
STOP IT, CASI!
YOU CAN HANDLE THIS!
No!
STOP BEING A BABY.
OH, GREAT.
MADISON.
PULL IT TOGETHER, CASI.

HI'YA, MADISON!
HELLO, CASANDRA.

MADISON...

...DO YOU
EVER SMILE?

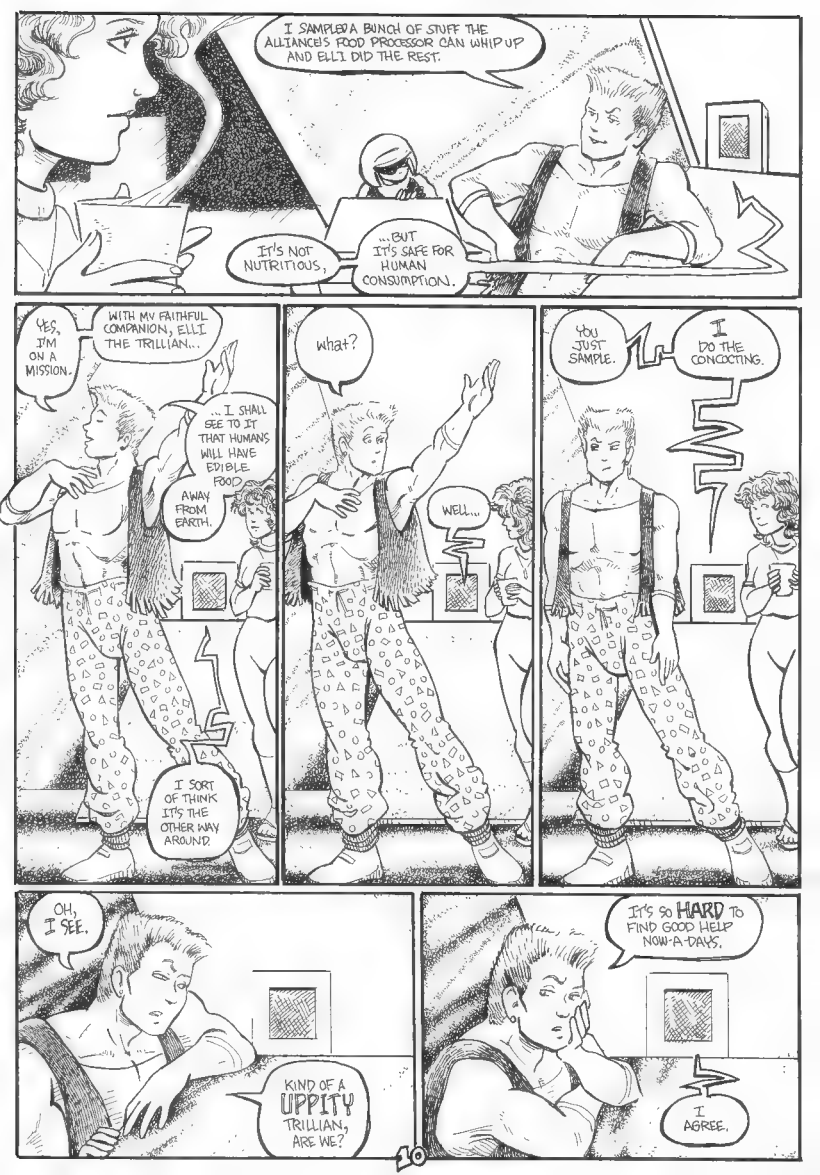

NO.
SO CASI, DID YOU EAT ANYTHING TODAY? GRAIKOR WANTS TO KNOW.
UM.

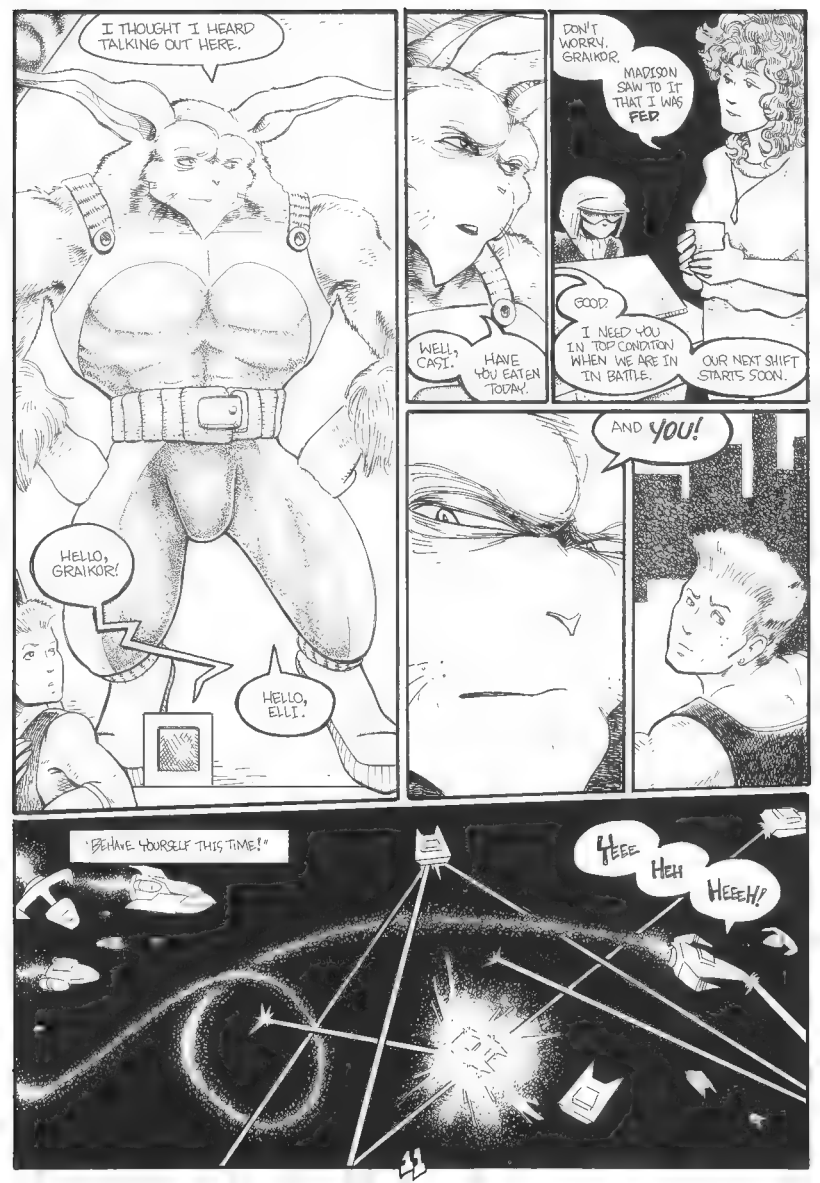
CAST!
GRAIKOR'S GOING TO HAVE A FIT IF HE FINDS OUT YOU HAVEN'T EATEN TODAY.
I JUST FORGOT.
I'LL EAT SOMETHING LATER.

CASANDRA...
...I KNOW THAT YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY, BUT NOT EATING WON'T MAKE THINGS BETTER.
AND GRAIKOR NEEDS YOU AT YOUR BEST ON THE WANDERING STAR.
MADISON...
...I REALLY WISH YOU WOULDN'T USE YOUR EMPATHY TO PRY INTO MY EMOTIONS.
IT DOESN'T TAKE EMPATHY TO KNOW THAT YOU'D BE WORRIED ABOUT EARTH AFTER WHAT'S HAPPENED.
I'M SORRY, MADISON.
I KNOW.
DO YOU HAVE ANY FAMILY, MADISON?
BACK ON FOBE?
UHHH...
...NO,
NO, I DON'T.
SOOOO...
...WHY DON'T WE GO OVER TO DE'SHON'S AND EAT FOOD?
THEN WE WON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT GRAIKOR?
SURE.

SO...
...TRY IT, JOEY!
GIVE ME A SECOND, ELLI.
MY TASTE BUDS ARE STILL RECOVERING FROM YOUR LAST ONE.
ugh!
COME ON, COME ON!
WHAT DO YOU THINK?
YOU KNOW...
...THIS AIN'T HALF BAD!
"HALF BAD"?
IS THAT GOOD?
YES.
SO...
...DO YOU THINK CASANDRA WILL LIKE IT?
ONLY ONE WAY TO FIND OUT.
HELLO, CASI-GIRL!
HI, MADISON-MAN!
HI'YA, JOEY!
...TRY THIS!
SO...
CASANDRA...

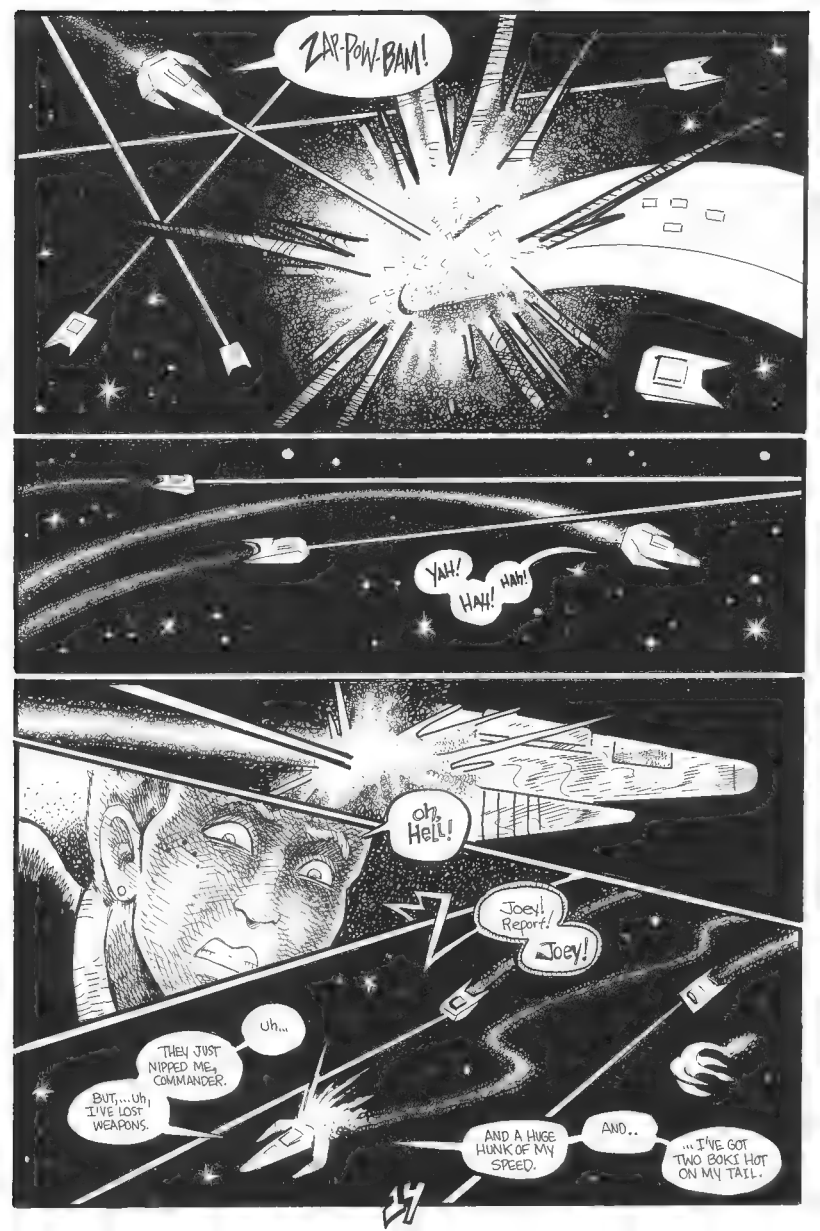
WHERE'S GRAI?
ON THE SHIP. WORKING OUT.
DID YOU KNOW HE'S GOT A MINI-GYM IN THERE?
WELL, HE DID DESIGN THE SHIP.
MAN, HE PROBABLY HAS A GREAT MUSIC SYSTEM IN THERE TOO, THEN.
NO WONDER HE DOESN'T STAY IN THE DORMS.
JOEY!
THIS TASTES LIKE HOT CHOCOLATE!
WHAT CAN I SAY?
I'M BRILLIANT.
... EXCUSE ME?
OH, SORRY, ELLI.
WE'RE BRILLIANT.

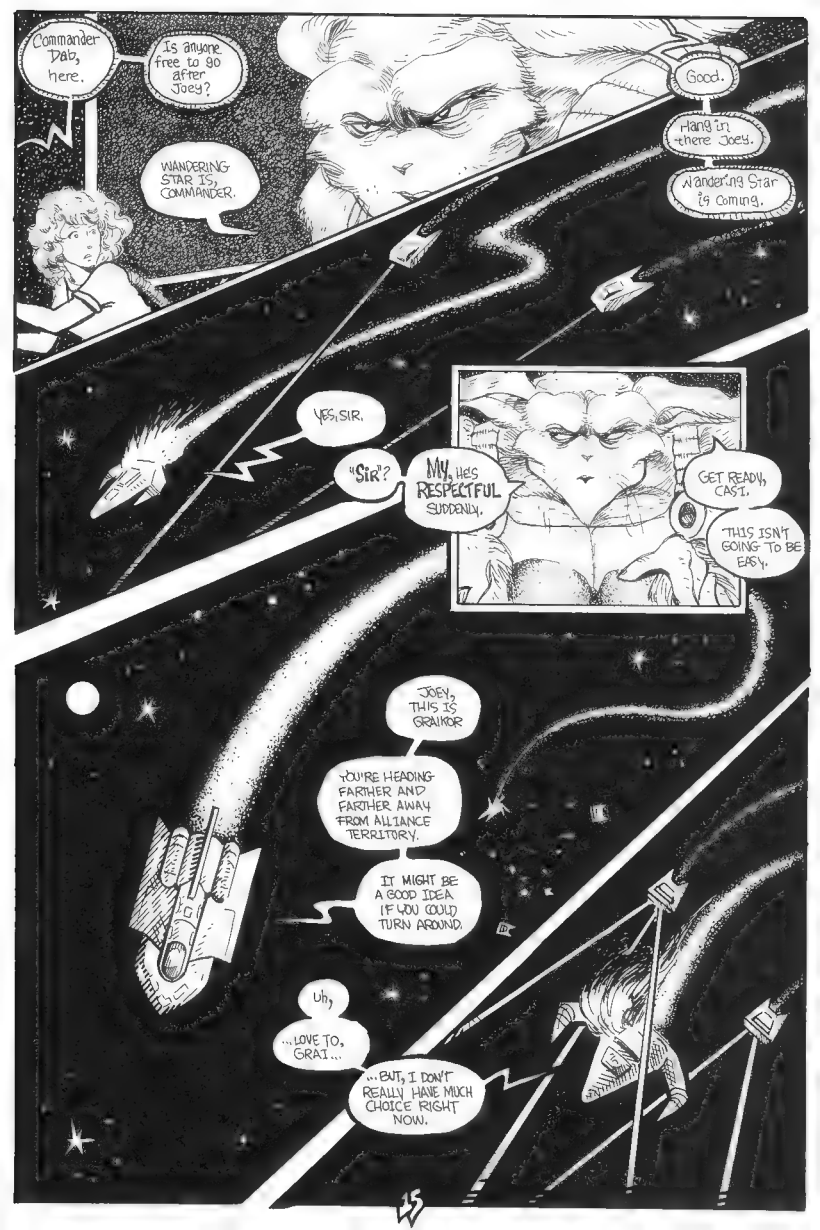

I SAMPLED A BUNCH OF STUFF THE ALLIANCE'S FOOD PROCESSOR CAN WHIP UP AND ELLI DID THE REST.
IT'S NOT NUTRITIOUS,
...BUT IT'S SAFE FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION.
YES, I'M ON A MISSION.
WITH MY FAITHFUL COMPANION, ELLI THE TRILLIAN...
...I SHALL SEE TO IT THAT HUMANS WILL HAVE EDIBLE FOOD AWAY FROM EARTH.
I SORT OF THINK IT'S THE OTHER WAY AROUND.
what?
WELL...
YOU JUST SAMPLE.
I DO THE CONCOCTING.
OH, I SEE.
KIND OF A UPPITY TRILLIAN, ARE WE?
IT'S SO HARD TO FIND GOOD HELP NOW-A-DAYS.
I AGREE.

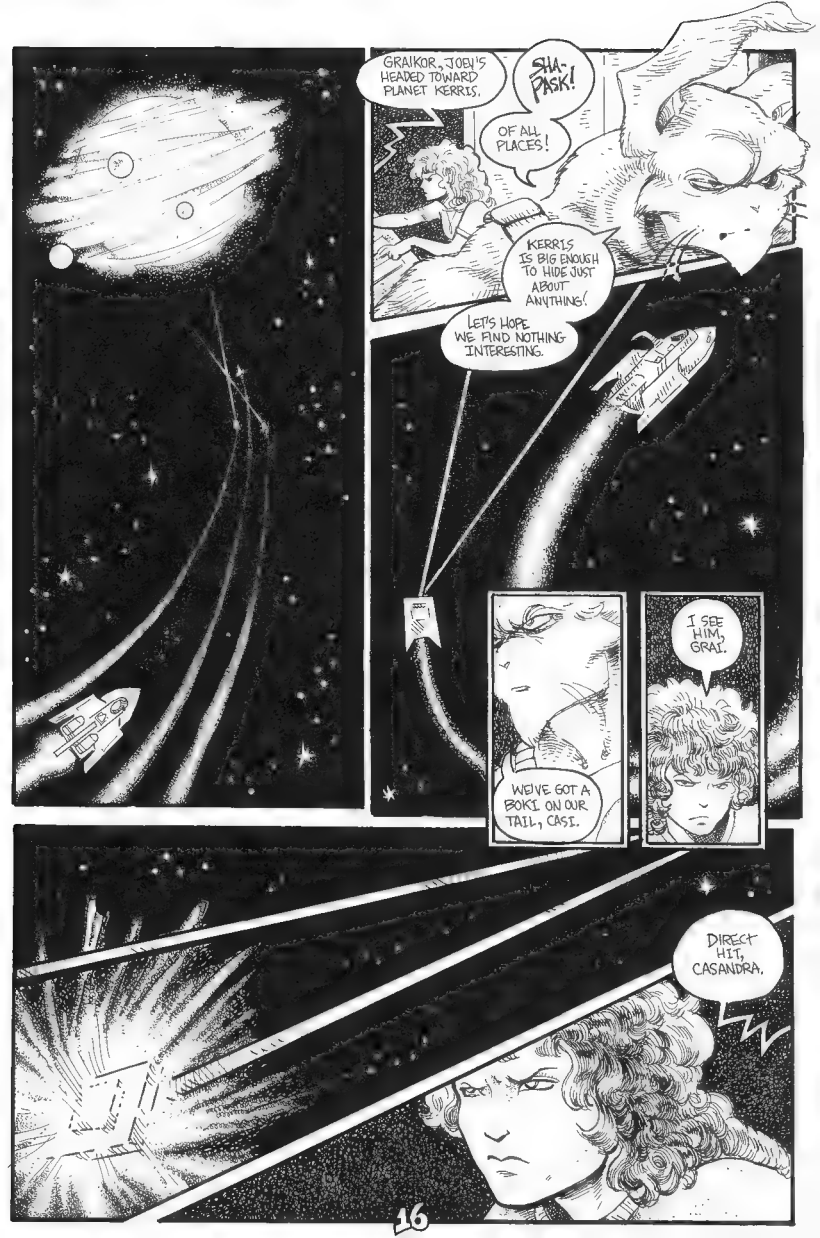

I THOUGHT I HEARD TALKING OUT HERE.
HELLO, GRAIKOR!
HELLO, ELLI.
WELL, CAST.
HAVE YOU EATEN TODAY.
DON'T WORRY, GRAIKOR.
MADISON SAW TO IT THAT I WAS FED.
GOOD.
I NEED YOU IN TOP CONDITION WHEN WE ARE IN IN BATTLE.
OUR NEXT SHIFT STARTS SOON.
AND YOU!
"BEHAVE YOURSELF THIS TIME!"
HEEE
HEH
HEEEH!

I GUESS THIS MEANS HE'S NOT GOING TO BEHAVE HIMSELF THIS TIME.
TAS SHAKAH!
WHY DO THE BONO KIRO ALWAYS HAVE TO ATTACK ON OUR SHIPT.
WHY CAN'T THEY ATTACK WHEN JOEY'S ON THE GROUND.
CASANDRA..
...BOKI COMING IN FAST ON THE RIGHT.
I'M ON IT, ELI.
BUZZAD!
CASI! CONCENTRATE!
THIS IS WAR!
YOU'VE GOT TO DO MORE THAN WING THEM!
YEEEEEE-
-HAH!

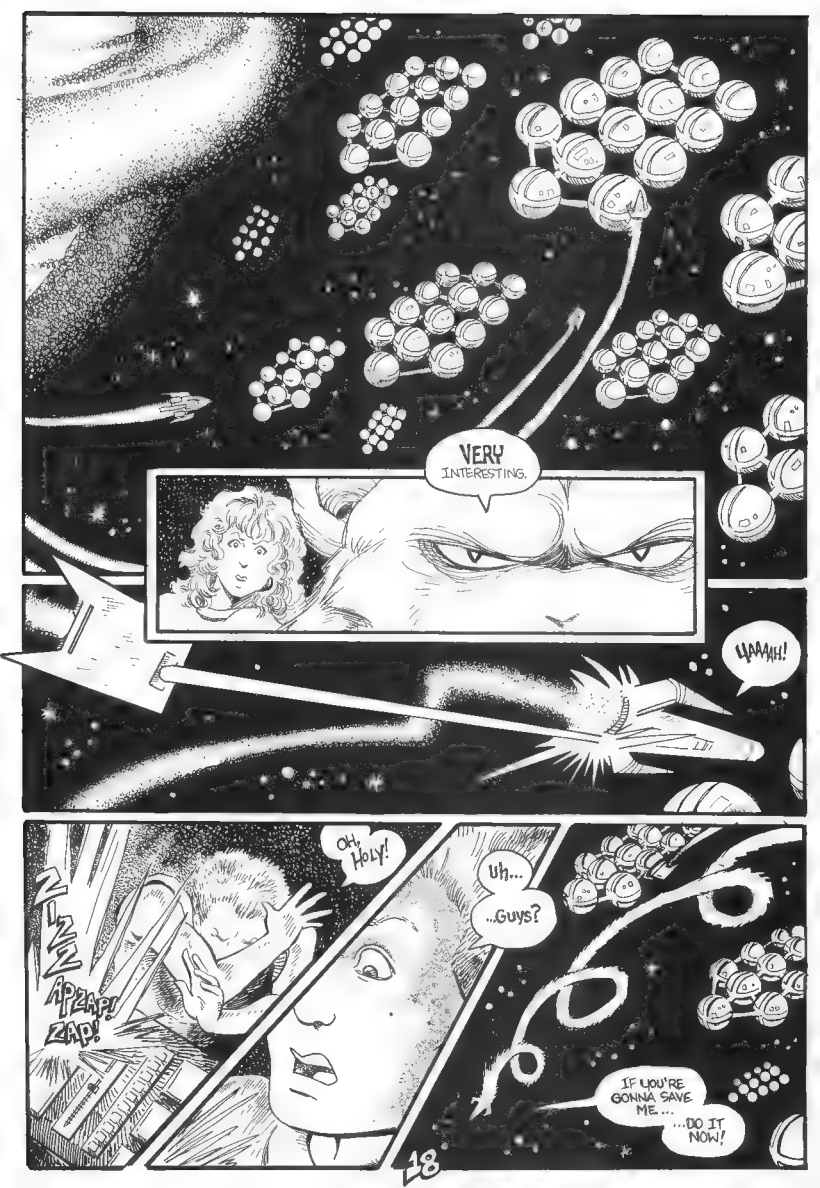
Joey! Get back here!
Ah, yes. My public hates my methods.
But, you can't argue with success!
Nobody blasts more Boki than Joey the Mad Space Rider!
Gee.
Nobody's ever been this close to a Boki command ship before.
heh!
heh!
heh!
heh!
What is that ginkin doing?
He couldn't possibly be thinking of...

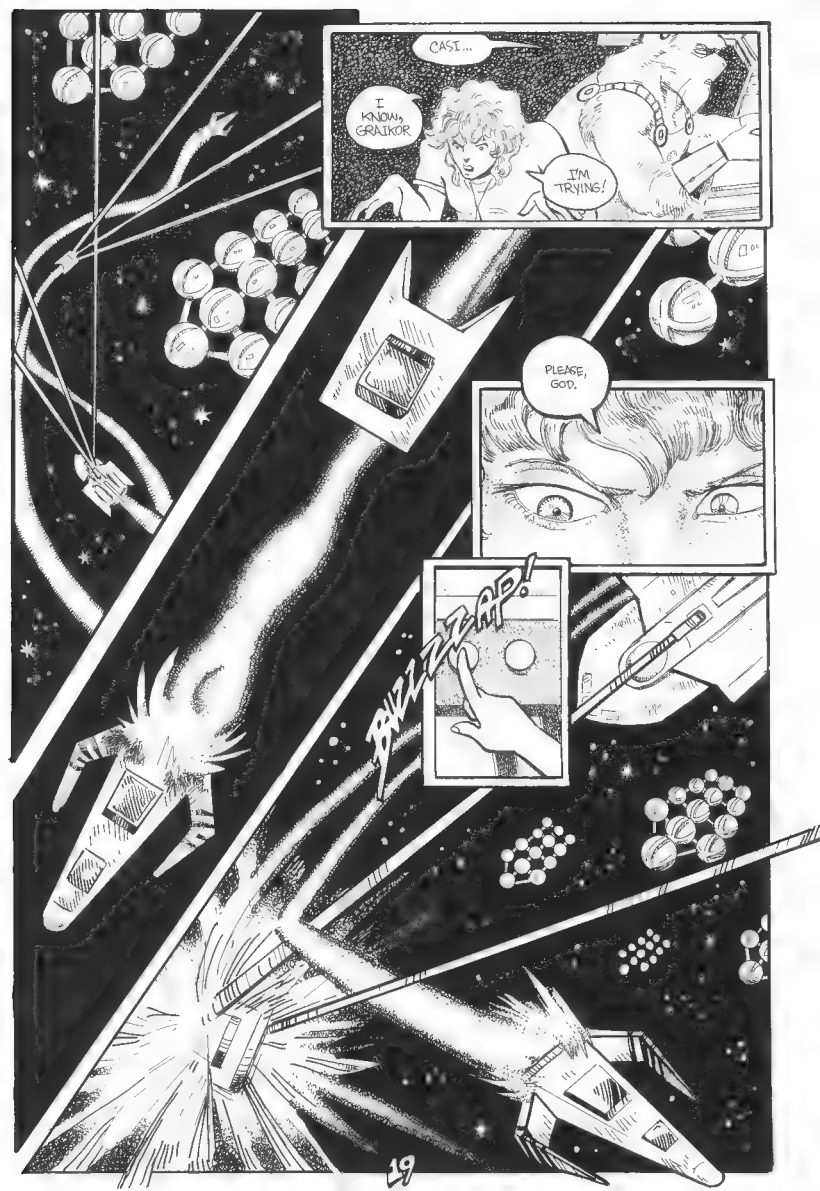

ZAP-POW-BAM!
YAH!
HAH!
HAH!
oh, Hell!
Joey! Report!
Joey!
Uh...
THEY JUST NIPPED ME, COMMANDER.
BUT,...uh, I'VE LOST WEAPONS.
AND A HUGE HUNK OF MY SPEED.
AND..
...I'VE GOT TWO BOKS HOT ON MY TAIL.


Commander Dab, here.
Is anyone free to go after Joey?
WANDERING STAR IS, COMMANDER.
Good.
Hang in there Joey.
Wandering Star is coming.
YES, SIR.
"SIR"?
MY, HE'S RESPECTFUL SUDDENLY.
GET READY, CAST.
THIS ISN'T GOING TO BE EASY.
JOEY, THIS IS GRAIKOR
YOU'RE HEADING FARTHER AND FARTHER AWAY FROM ALLIANCE TERRITORY.
IT MIGHT BE A GOOD IDEA IF YOU COULD TURN AROUND.
Uh,
...LOVE TO, GRAI...
...BUT, I DON'T REALLY HAVE MUCH CHOICE RIGHT NOW.

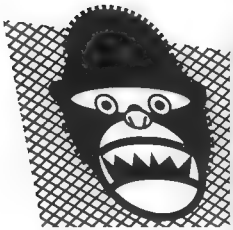

GRAIKOR, JOEI'S HEADED TOWARD PLANET KERRIS.
SHA-PASK!
OF ALL PLACES!
KERRIS IS BIG ENOUGH TO HIDE JUST ABOUT ANYTHING.
LET'S HOPE WE FIND NOTHING INTERESTING.
WE'VE GOT A BOKI ON OUR TAIL, CASI.
I SEE HIM, GRAI.
DIRECT HIT, CASANDRA.

WE'RE HIT!
WANDERING STAR
ELIJ! DAMAGE REPORT!
ONLY MINOR STRUCTURAL DAMAGE.
BUT...
...WE NEED TO TAKE HIM OUT BEFORE HE CAN HIT US AGAIN.
SON OF A...
ONE DOWN.
ONE TO GO.
WHAT IN...
HUH?


VERY INTERESTING.
UAAAH!
OH, HOLY!
ZZZZ
ZAP! ZAP! ZAP!
UH...
...GUYS?
IF YOU'RE GONNA SAVE ME...
...DO IT NOW!


CASI...
I KNOW, GRAIKOR
I'M TRYING!
PLEASE, GOD.
BUZZZZZZZZZ!

@★#!!
GOOD WORK, CASI.
Thank you, Graikor.
ELLI, LOCK ONTO JOEY'S SHIP AND PREPARE FOR HOOK UP.
JOEY, STAND BY. WE'RE BRINGING YOU ABOARD.
YES, SIR.
CASI, COULD YOU GO UP TO THE DECK AND HELP GET JOEY ON BOARD?
Oh,
I'LL GO GET HIM, ALRIGHT.
YOU REALIZE, OF COURSE...
...I MIGHT SNAP...
...AND SLIGHTLY KILL HIM IN THE PROCESS.
I WANT TO BE OUT OF HERE BEFORE THE BONO KIRD REALIZE HOW CLOSE WE ARE TO THEIR SUPPLY SHIPS.
AS LONG AS YOU HURRY.
O.K.
GRAIKOR?
WHAT ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT?
POSSIBILITIES, ELLI.
POSSIBILITIES.



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STRANGE ATTRACTORS

from

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Continued from inside front cover . . . .

Created by Colleen Doran. A truly talented artist.

6. **STARCHILD:** Taliesin Press. (Box 40904, Mesa, AZ 85274-0904.)
Created by James A. Owen.
STARCHILD is a strange and wonderful fantasy book. Definitely worth checking out.

7. **BEANWORLD:** Beanworld Press. (Box 1099, Forestville, CA 94536.)
Created by Larry Marder.
Gee, what can you say about this book? It's wonderfully weird. Do yourself a favor and pick up an issue.

OTHER COOL COMICS YOU MIGHT WANT TO CHECK OUT:

.....

1. **STRANGE ATTRACTORS:** RetroGrafix. (2130 Williams #3, Bellingham, WA 98225.)
Created by Michael Cohen & Mark Sherman.
Check out the S.A. ad in the back of this issue. Cool, eh?

2. **SHOTT LOOSE:** Absolute Comics. (Box 7344, Waco, TX 76714.)
Written by Bill Haney, drawn by various.
This book has some of the stupidest jokes I've EVER read in a Sci-Fi comic. It's **great.** I plan to read EVERY issue.

Before I go, I want to say how thankful I've been, these last twelve months, for the support I've received from . . . heck, seems like from just about everyone. I am deeply grateful and consider myself one of the luckiest people on the face of the Earth. And to each of you, may you all have more love, luck, pizza and Kit Kat bars than you know what to do with!

Teri S. Wood

P.S. I know some of you have been unsettled by the pictures of missing children I run in the back of my books, well, I have some news that my comfort you some. I received a package the other day from the MISSING CHILDREN . . . Help Center with a replacement photo for a little girl I was going to run in the next issue. They found her. Isn't it nice to know that sometimes there IS a happy ending?

See ya in May!

Wandering Thoughts

Box 549, El Centro, CA 92244-0549

Dear Terrible Teri,

I've enclosed a copy of the January 7, 1994 edition of Main Street News (my weekly store newsletter). As you can see, this is my "pitch" for WS. I handed out over 100 copies of this (one with every purchase). I'm currently sold out of all 1+2 sets and am down to my last copies of #3 and #4. (I actually still have two #1's, but I'm waiting to make sets with the #2's).

I got the damaged #3's. I'm going to give these (along with a copy of the newsletter) to WS subscribers and subscribers who get ELFQUEST, BONE, CEREBUS or HEPCATS but don't already get WS. I am, however, going to wait until I've got all the other issues back in stock. (By the way, if there isn't much cost difference, stuff gets to me much faster via US Mail than UPS.) Once I get more copies from you I'm going to try and keep the 1+2 sets prominently displayed so that people who didn't pick them up right away will be tempted in the future.

As for the WANDERING STAR WATCH...

Previous count: 10 subscribers.

° A guy who works at another comic book store got 1-4 from me and will order the remaining issues through his store. (I'm counting him, so that's 11)

* A now-and-then customer named J.P. Swing got 1-4 from me and said he sent you $16 to subscribe to the remaining issues. (That's 12)

° Two more subscribers in the store. (That's 14).

I'm afraid Wendy didn't like #1, so she's not one of the new subscribers. However, one of the new guys said he sent you money for a Casi print and other stuff. Also I'm still waiting to hear from one guy who bought 1-4, and I've got another guy who wants a 1+2 set as soon as I get them in.

With 12 in-store subscribers you're now tied with AMAZING SPIDER-MAN (which sells over 200,000 copies nationally). I'm going to order 20 copies of #6 through Diamond, so I don't have to worry about your terrible fate threats anymore.

Don Butler (my old CR editor who works for HERO ILLUSTRATED now) got the 1-4 I sent him, but hasn't read them yet. (But I'm nagging him.)

I just got WS #5, and I did get my five extras from Diamond.

Sincerely,
Preston A. Sweet,
who is a little disappointed that he didn't even get a teeny tiny mention in WS #5.
("Sniff")

Postscripts . . .
° I also got the sampler of #3 and (I must confess) I'm very impressed with the little flyer you had in each one.

° I think your readers were just being polite by not asking about your equestrian origins. It's no reason to be "dissapointed" or even disappointed.

° Page 7: Fone Bone, The Dragon, Cerebus, Swoon, Girl with hat and scarf (I don't know her name), and a little guy who looks like Albert Einstein. Page 13: Erica wearing a Beanworld character and Usagi Yojimbo.

If you guys are wondering about this "damaged #3" business, Preston called, asking for more copies of Book Three, but I was sold out. I only had some damaged ones left. Not wanting to charge for damaged goods, I said I'd send him a few, free of charge, as long as he gave them away, used them as promos, etc. (which he did).

"Dissapointed"?? Man, Oliver the Proof-reading Cat missed another one! What is the world coming to when you can't even trust your cat to proof-read a lousy twenty-paged comic? (See if I pay for his flying lessons now, boy!)

And, Albert Einstein, Preston? That's the librarian from James Owen's STARCHILD.

And readers, you can thank Preston here for that kind write-up I got in HEROES ILLUSTRATED #9 (Nagging works, sometimes.), and for introducing me to Jeff Mason of ABSOLUTE COMICS AND CARDS. I just did my first phone interview with Jeff, which should have just appeared on COMPUSERVE. That was pretty cool. I haven't seen it yet (as of this writing), and I hope I didn't sound TOO stupid.

* * * * * * * *

Retailers! I give you permission to do whatever you want, to promote WANDERING STAR! Go crazy! I figure if it's good enough for Dave Sim, it's good enough for me.

* * * * * * * *

Hello again, Teri:

First of all, CONGRATULATIONS on being sold out on issues #1 & 3! (Perhaps by now maybe 2 & 4 can be added to that list, hey?)

I don't recall if I ever told you what my job is so here goes: I'm an LTC (Licensed Tax Consultant). Please no boos or hisses, I'm one of the good guys. I try to make sure folks pay the legally lowest possible amount of taxes to Uncle Sam, or his state cousins. This is my 'busy' time of year, but I hope that I will be able to take at least one day off before April 15th.

Do you know I received my copies of WANDERING STAR #4 two days after my #5's arrived? Somehow I managed to mess up and not get them ordered in November and I was waiting, and waiting and then POOF! I receive a box in with a couple copies of #5 and I hit the panic button. I called Excalibur comics in Portland and they still had two copies on hand, so I grabbed my plastic and said "charge it". Two days later I had them in my hands. (Thank you, Visa.)

As far as the local shop goes, I have hounded, attempted to bribe, and just flat bugged him to carry WANDERING STAR, but it's hopeless! Consider him one of the unenlightened. The man will buy 800 copies of each X-Men #1, in all five covers (of which he still has a very good suppy) but he won't break down and order even two copies of WANDERING STAR, or most other black and whites for that matter. Yet, when he does get in some black and whites he usually sells out. Is this guy dense or what?

Now that I've babbled long enough, it's about time I got around to commenting on books 4 & 5. I feel that you are putting out one of the best comics on the market, black & white or color, period, exclamation point! I am quite serious, I've been a bookworm for a long time so it takes something extra to really get a response out of me. I'll give you a clue, I originally gave up on comics when they raised their prices to a whole $0.25. They cost too much. I remember buying $0.60 paperbacks.

The dialog on pages 3 & 4 of Book Four really hit home. When Casandra said "But she didn't survive, Aldar, I survived." The way you drew her face was excellent, that is not the face of a care-free little girl. That is not the face of the woman on page seven going "AAH! Stress! Stress!". That Casandra is still free and happy. Her soul has yet to be tempered by the hell of the war to come.

You continue to build on the "souls" of your characters, making them into interesting beings rather then some black ink on a white piece of paper. Your work with the eyes of your characters is some of the best I've seen for expressing emotions. The eyes are the "windows to the soul" and you have managed to transfer that to the paper. These are beings I have come to care about. They are even more "alive" then some of the folks I've met in the real world. What can I say except BRAVO!

Having managed to stumble and not get my copy of #4 until after #5 arrived, I got to cheat a little and read the letters page in #5 concerning #4. War is not now, nor I hope will it ever be, a simple, clean and tidy affair. People are killed, usually in a very brutal and messy manner. Property and the lives of the survivors are damaged or destroyed, and even those who are not on the front line, have their lives altered and shaped by the insanity of war. Yes, the panel on page 14 was a stark contrast to what WANDERING STAR has been up to that point. But war is ugly and foul and something that any sane being should avoid if at all possible. That panel of the dead student, along with the panel of Lindi's dead face on page 16, are the faces of war. They are not pretty or funny or cute, but they are right. You were correct to put them in, shocking though they may be to some. You have a comic which both entertains and makes a person think. Not all thoughts are pleasant, nor should they be. I will cherish #4 just as much as I do the

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first three, and the ones that follow it.

One final comment on #4, while I do consider Mekon a mean character and one who I had hoped to see cut down a peg or two, the death of a loved one is not something I would wish on anyone. Again, I say the faces of war are tragic, and full of sorrow. It is not a pleasant thing, nor, God help us, will it ever be something that mankind revels in.

On to number 5. Having read Madison's reply to Casandra's question about being a psychic, let me say this: I would not wish the ability to "hear" the thoughts of others on my worst enemy. The dialog in the panels on page 4 were chilling. I hadn't really considered Madison that strong a character prior to that, but after reading his "reply", the fact that he was still sane at the end of their escape, let alone the end of the war, proves he has a titanium soul. I would think it would drive most people mad.

Pages 8 and 9 make me think of the current world affairs in Bosnia. While I despise war and all that goes with it, no one person, group, or nation should be allowed to attack another without suffering the consequences of their action. If the entire world would unite and not only condemn with words, but respond with swift and overwhelming force, when one nation attacks another, perhaps this would be a more peaceful and sane world. Good reasons for not getting involved be damned! There are no "good reasons." Acts of aggression must be countered with swift and terrible retribution. War is a terrible and ugly thing, and those who would make war on others must be made to understand just how terrible it is.

It appears to me that Casandra is starting the process of "losing her innocence" on page 11. Her face in the bottom panel and the dialog that follows on 12, struck me as the beginning of the end for the care-free Casandra. I've said it before and I'll say it again, you put a great deal of emotion into your characters. I hope that Joey is allowed to live and develop along with the rest, even as a minor character. He looks interesting. I enjoyed the "whatta world" routine.

Well, seeing how I have gotten totally carried away when I wrote this letter (I would suspect it's length guarantees it's not appearing in the letters page), let me close with a question and a comment. First, are any of the Rhudiprrt pages left? I was very sorry when I learned you would no longer be doing the art for Rhudiprrt. It just isn't the same book anymore. And, second, I feel that your cover art is very attractive. The cover art helps set your books apart from the rest. They look very clean and elegant. So don't change for the whiners. I like'em!

Yours,
Mark L. Severson
1073 W. Ridgeway Ave.
Hermiston, Oregon 97838

Gee, thanks, Dude!

* * * * * * * * *

Dear Teri,

This is an official "open forum" fan letter to let you know how much I've been enjoying your wonderful WANDERING STAR series. Comic are a funny medium. Most other entertainment mediums--television, movies, and "real" books--assume that as an audience segment matures they are going to want entertainment suitable to their level of maturity. This is why television programming runs the gambit from Barney the Purple Dinosaur to Masterpiece Theatre, and such movies as Howard's End can play in a theatre next to Home Alone 2; different fare for different people. Comics, however, have generally not come to that same conclusion. Mainly, the big companies continue to focus their efforts on promoting the adventures of leotard-clad steroid abusers who enjoy beating each other up. This is entertainment? Not for me.

WANDERING STAR is a refreshing change from the cesspool that mainstream comics have become. This tale of the adventure of a girl far from home is far more intriguing than a "super-guy" who dies-then-gets-better or another who gets his back broken and then gets to watch the guy who replaces him go psycho. Good plot and interesting characters, with an individualistic art style which advances the storytelling, are the ingredients which make WANDERING STAR a good read. How come a girl from El Centro, who works in a deli, is one of the relative few (with ELFQUEST, CEREBUS, BONE, STARCHILD, A DISTANT SOIL, and SANDMAN being some of the exceptions) who has figured out the simple mystery of good comics?

Anyhow, I've spewed enough for one day. Keep up the good work. I'm glad you put all those ads in the COMICS BUYER'S GUIDE (and all you WS readers who are now putting your ads in there too, in order to promote WS, keep it up!) because they allowed me to be turned on to a good read.

May everyone carry the fruit of his or her choice!!!

Best,
Conrad L. Stinnett III

Thanks, Conrad! And "congrads!" on landing the "Marketing Director" job at WARP GRAPHICS!

* * * * * * * * *

Hello.

Number FIVE??? **FIVE?!?** What th'heck happened to 3 and 4??

Every week I take a 30 to 45 minute drive from Muscatine to Iowa City so I can spend a bit of my paycheck on comics and music. My tastes are somewhat, uh, non-standard, and the kind of stuff I like can only be found in large cities and college towns.

DAYDREAMS (the comic shop I patronize) gets their comics on Thursday, I believe. I arrive there usually sometime Friday afternoon. Mike (the owner) assures me that he DID have copies of numbers 3 and 4 in the store. Either I was outstandingly unobservant or his stock SOLD OUT in the space of a day and a half. I don't know whether to bribe him with a candy bar or whack him with one. Save ME a copy, Mike!

So I got your holiday card in the mail (cute) and realized that I'd missed two issues of your comic. Aag! I'm sending you $5. Please send them soon.

I can sympathize with your employment woes. My own job at a shirt-button factory lets me afford neat music and comics (like yours). I have to be careful with my funds, though. These days, most of it is going

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towards equipment and supplies for my own self-publishing effort, a tiny recording label through which I release my musical compositions (Extremely avant-garde: my definition of "music" is somewhat wide). Professional recorders and instruments are EXPENSIVE.

Fear not, though--your comic is on my MUST GET list. Assuming it's on the shelf, I will buy it without fail. The others on the list are, in no particular order: BONE, THOSE ANNOYING POST BROS., SAVAGE HENREY (oops--it's on hiatus now), TALES OF THE BEANWORLD (when it comes out), and YUMMY FUR; plus a few new additions--POISON ELEVES, SIN COMICS and SWAMP THING. (I have to get that last one, since a good friend is drawing it now.)

Well, I hope this letter lifts your spirits in some small way, and if it doesn't, well--here's MONEY!

Colin Wales
P.O. Box 1324
Muscatine, IA 52761

P.S. What's all this business with fruit, anyway?

Beats me, Colin. At least I never hav'ta worry about the readers of WS getting scurvy.

* * * * * * * *

Fellow T-person,

Hey, what does "El Centro" mean in Spanish, anyway? For the record, Lafayette is French for "The Fayette." Heh.

Thanks much for sending the interview. This is wonderful stuff, Teri, sincerely. You come across wonderfully, with lots of humor and charm (which means you've fooled our readers!) Watch, this will be a very well received piece in SMALL PRESS FEEDBACK. On that subject, I think Bob will be sending you the info on that issue so you can plug it. Since it's the first ish distributed in comic shops, it may get a lot of circulation. Once again, my thanks for doing it.

Now, my immense gratitude for WS #4 and #5. Let me tell you, there are few pleasures greater in the comic biz than sitting down to two consecutive Teri S. Wood extravaganzas. No B.S. here; I think this may have cinched WS as my official favorite comic that I'm currently reading (and yes, I read more than one comic a month, smarty-pants!) Simply put, you are GOOD; that's the long and short of it. You were born to create comics (yeah, I know it'll be a great loss to the world of slicing meat, but they'll have to live with it). Let me mention some specifics about these two issues (in patented Hickman-scope!)

#4

* Loved the space sequence on pgs. #1 and #2.

* It's a silly thing to praise you for, perhaps, but I thought Casi's bell-bottoms were really cool (suddenly, I'm Mr. Blackwell).

* Great series of facial expressions at the top of pg. #7. Always one of your strong points.

* The change of mood once the attack starts is fantastic. You've absolutely captured the foreboding and the horror of the situation. It reminded me very much of what survivors of nuclear attacks have described. Chilling stuff, and remarkably done.

* Stunning full pager on #20. It has a real Moebius feeling to it. Coincidence?

* Thanks much for not only printing my letter in #4, but for being gracious enough to plug my comic (and it probably should be plugged with a .44 Magnum, but I digress). Wow, you wore my button to the San Diego Con? Were you trying to cover up a stain on your shirt?

#5

* Page 2, panel 1; I still say you draw the most attractive women in comics (I will not apologize for my testosterone!)

* Madison's description of being psychic (pg.#4) was great; a powerful analogy.

* The description of the crew's trip to the Alliance stronghold was very will-done; as a reader, I could really feel the hardship of it.

* What has always made this a great comic (well, besides the fantastic art, depth of characterization, and epic plotting) are the small touches. A great example of this is the penultimate panel on page #10 (say that five times fast), in which Grai puts his hands on Casi's shoulders in preparation for what they're about to be told. I love that panel, and panels like that are one of a large part of the reason why I'm so crazy about this series.

* Pages #12-15 show a tremendous skill and aptitude for this medium. I think I've made the comparison before, but you have a comics timing similar to that of Alex Toth.

* Boffo ending.

I'm gushing and fawning, aren't I? Well, the heck with it. If it's gushing to be honestly in awe of talent, then damn me for a weenie! (Now there's a phrase you don't hear every day) Seriously, this comic is going to be remembered for a long, long time (and no, not as "the psychotic fantasies of cult leader Teri S. Wood"!)

By the way, thanks for signing my copies. I do appreciate it (and I'll appreciate it even more once I've mastered your signature enough to fool the bank).

Yeah, I know what you mean about getting behind in your mail (no, I don't mean someone sending me their backside). After I wing this one off to you, I've got another fifteen or twenty letters to write (that's a four day accumulation). Of course, mine aren't letters of admiration from Isaac Asimov and Frank Frazetta (do I have a warped view of your life?). Mine are more likely to be from the Rash-of-the-Month Club or letter from ladies in prison named "Big Doris" (Gee, I hope she got my birthday card).

Hey, a late-breaking news item: I just received Sean Bierie's artwork for PATHETIC CLUB #3, and it's incredible. He took my crummy script and geometrically improved it. If you liked the first two issues, you will love this. Trust me. As soon as I get them printed up (which will be when I get my tax refund), I'll rush one off to you.

Well, I'd better quit bothering you (for the moment) and get back to work. Thank you again for everything; you are truly a lady and a gentleman (what the...?), and I do appreciate it. Talk to you later, of great mistress of Wood!

Farewell and Good Fortune,
Troy Hickman
AVERNUS COMICS
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Company in the Business!
3200 S. 9th ST.
Apt. A
Lafayette, IN 47905

"El Centro?" I should make ya wonder, Wise-guy. But, it means, "The Center" of the Imperial Valley.

As for the rest of the letter, gee, Thanks Troy! (Blush!)

And yes, Dear Readers, I did do an interview with my buddy Troy here. Drop him a line about how you can get a copy of that issue of SMALL PRESS FEEDBACK.

* * * * * * * *

Dear Teri,

What a fabulous day it's been today. A light rain has been falling (that beats the heck out of snow), work was not as hectic today as it has been all week, and, to top it all off, issue #5 of WANDERING STAR was waiting for me at my local comic shop. I couldn't wait to get home and indulge myself in some wonderful story-telling and beautiful art. Little did I realize that when I started reading the comments on the inside cover that I would be mentioned - I thought that was pretty cool.

Okay. Okay. What's the deal about you being named after a horse? I want the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Or a fascinating lie, whichever.

Did I thank you for sending me the original 1988 (not 1989) small press version of WANDERING STAR? If not, let me do so now. THANKS! It's pretty cool. I see your art has improved as well as the storytelling. (If I already thanked you, well, THANKS AGAIN!)

I wanted to let you know that I have not only recommended WANDERING STAR to a few people, but I have also sent a few issues to some fine folks I have started corresponding with (because of letters written in CBG). I have urged a couple of them to write you because they can't find your book in their areas. So, if you hear from Mr. Curt Mabry or William Sims, treat them well (as I'm sure you would).

I am going to bother a couple of my local retail stores to see if they would be a part of THE GREAT WANDERING STAR TOUR OF 1994. I know I'd love to meet you and there might be a few others (I'm trying to convert) who would be interested.

I won't try to figure you out from the music you mentioned in your comments from issue #5, if you won't try to figure me out from the music I enjoy: Kate Bush, Alan Parsons, Prefab Sprout, Miguel Bose, Peter Gabriel and David Sylvian--to name a few. Music is another of my three favorite hobbies (the other two being comics, of course, and cooking).

Now on to the comments about WANDERING STAR #5. The story is progressing very nicely. It continues to be well-paced, intelligent and utterly charming. How much like the character Cassandra do you consider yourself (if at all)? The art is very pleasing to the eyes and I think it's getting better and better. On page 13, I did notice the little tribute to Martin Wagner's HEPCATS and, what's this, Mr. Spook, from BEANWORLD? (I am now going to search for other of these "tributes" that I may have missed in past issues).

Hey! I almost forgot to thank you for the wonderful Christmas card. I hope you had a decent holiday season and are off to a very terrific and prosperous new year.

Well, I'll see you in March.

All the best,
Craig T. Powell
3579 San Carlos Drive
Salt Lake City, UT 84119-5623

Horse? Sorry, can't tell ya. Too many people around. (But, if you will all be good little readers, maybe I'll tell you next issue.)

Am I like Casandra? Um, well, I kinda think I'm a little like ALL of my characters. I think F. Scott Fitzgerald said it best: "Writers aren't exactly people . . . they're a whole lot of people trying to be one person."

And, yes, I heard from both of your friends, but did you know that Curt Mabry just happens to have a children's show! And he's going to recommend WANDERING STAR on it!!! OH my GAWD! I'm gonna be on T.V.!!! I'm famous now!

* * * * * * * *

One last thing before I exit left, something I should'a brought up in my editorial, but I forgot. I, uh, seem to have confused everyone, once again, on the subject of my birthday. When I said that the calendar thing in the back of WANDERING STAR was supposed to mean that my birthday was on the 21st, and not that I was turning 21, I meant APRIL 21st, not January 21st!!! (Boy, it's a good thing I decided to be a comic book creator and not a journalist. Imagine the chaos I could have created!) Anyway, to all of you who very kindly wished me a happy birthday, sent me cards, etc., I apologize for the mix-up.

See you next issue, my little WANDERERS!

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ITEM FOR POSTAGE AND HANDLING!

I had a couple of extra pages this issue, so I've decided to pull a "Dave Sim" and do two one-paged previews of SHOTT LOOSE and STRANGE ATTRACTORS.

This first one is SHOTT LOOSE: Quarg President Axaxas Mo and Julia Shott are zipping between the dimensions in search of her husband Gideon Shott. Discovering the rather "Twilight Zoneyness" of the ride, Julia begins to see why Axaxas wanted her to leave her toddler behind . . . .

Page Two of SHOTT LOOSE # 4. Heh. I thought that was so funny. Check SL out!

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STRANGE ATTRACTORS is chock full o pirates, space ships, magic and comic books! And, if the ad I'm running doesn't hook ya, maybe this will . . . .

Page Twenty-Four of STRANGE ATTRACTORS #3. Oooo, what did Widow find out?

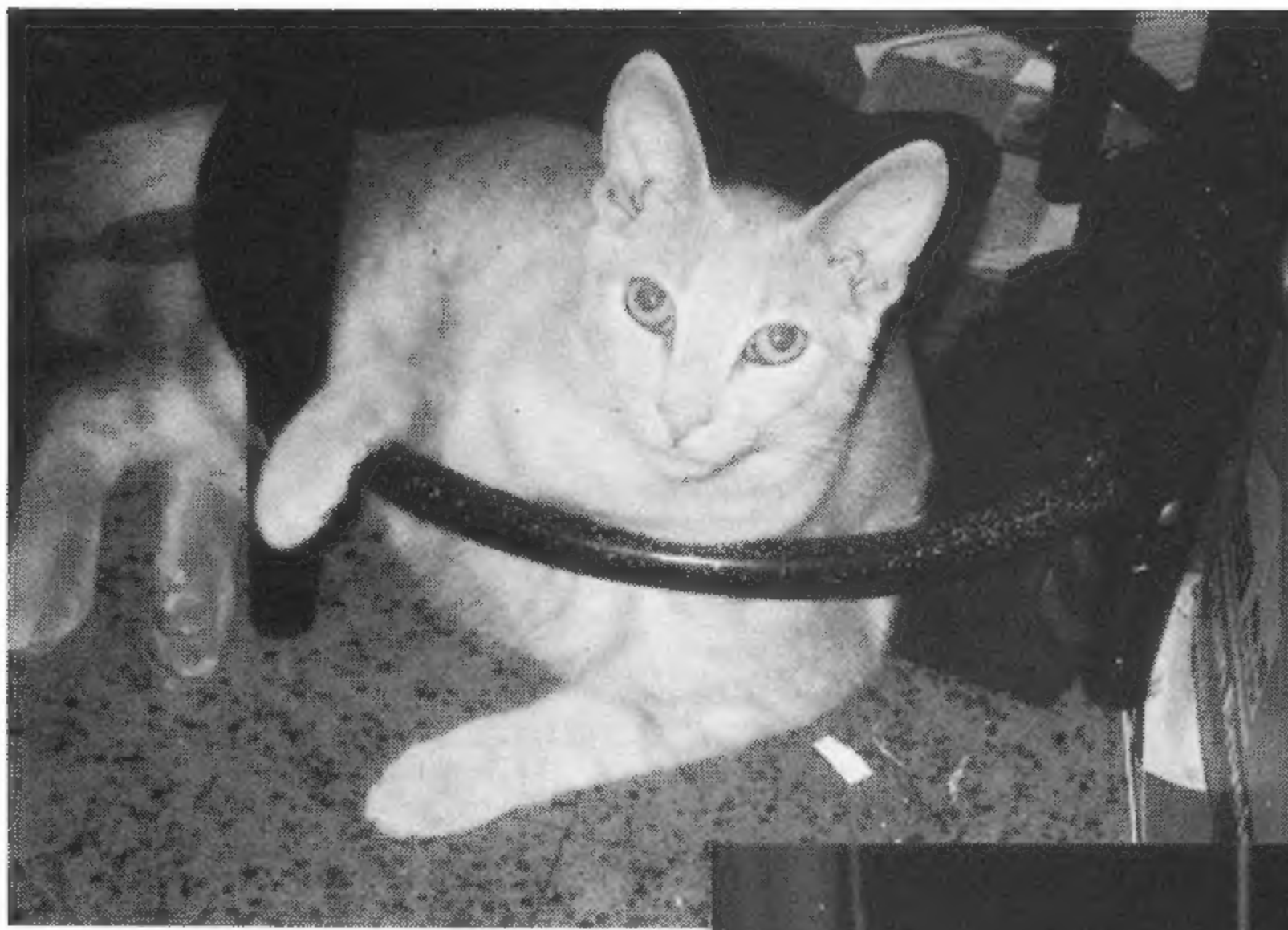
PEN AND INK COMICS

PHOTO GALLERY

FOOL'N AROUND WITH THE WANDERING STAR CREW AT DISNEYLAND AFTER THE 1993 SAN DIEGO COMIC CON!

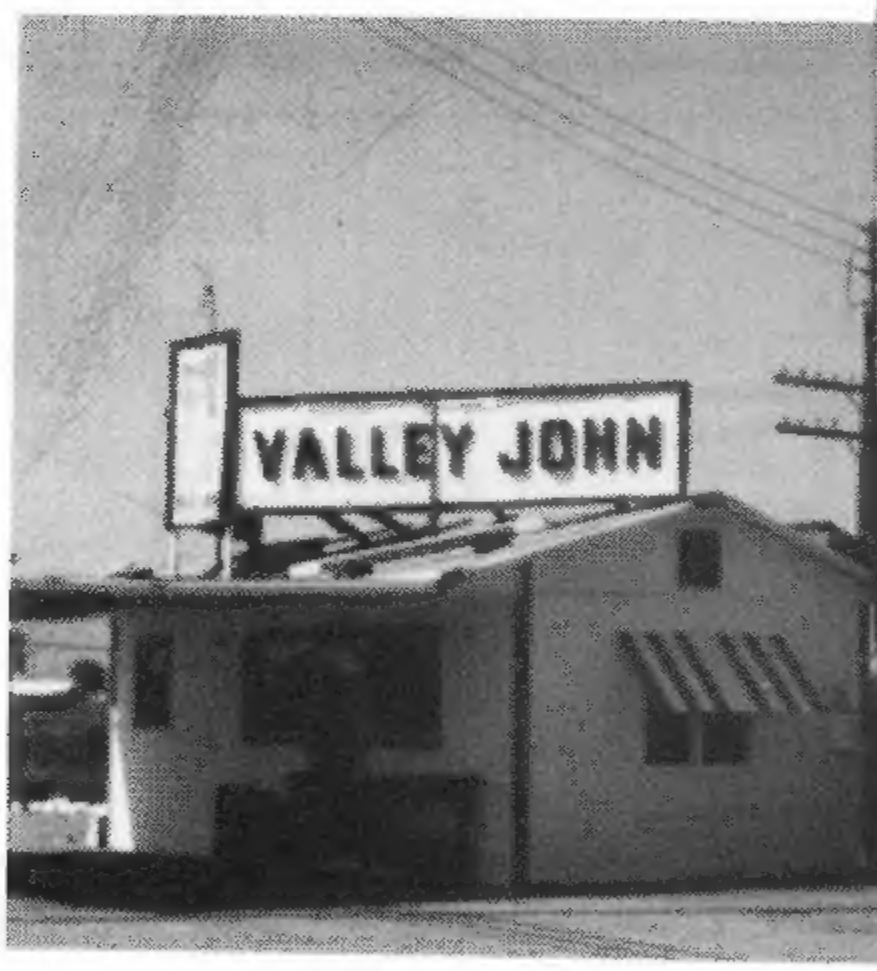
MY SISTER MARY! <WHO WILL PROBABLY KILL ME WHEN SHE SEE'S THIS.>

BAD PICTURE OF TWERP PARROT!



OLIVER the PROOF-READING CAT ~ FORCED TO SLEEP UNDER A STOOL, ON THE COLD FLOOR, BECAUSE HE DIDN'T CATCH "DISSAPOINTED" IN THE LAST ISSUE.

MEK and SILVER (FROM "THE CARTOONIST") HAPPILY MINDING MY SAN DIEGO TABLE WHILE MARY + I GO DRINK DOUBLE EXPRESSOS.



EL CENTRO IS REALLY SMALL.

ME, AT THE OFFICE OF PEN AND INK COMICS, WEARING MY MICKEY MOUSE HAT AND MY "TOO-COOL-FOR-COLOR-T.V." GLASSES!

K

THE Wandering Star SUPER SCHEDULE!

1994!

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE
WANDERING STAR BOOK #5		WANDERING STAR BOOK #6	Happy Birthday to me! (April 21st)	WANDERING STAR BOOK #7	
JULY	**AUGUST**	**SEPTEMBER**	**OCTOBER**	**NOVEMBER**	**DECEMBER**
WANDERING STAR BOOK #8		WANDERING STAR BOOK #9		WANDERING STAR BOOK #10	

1995!

JANUARY	FEBURARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE
WANDERING STAR BOOK #11		WANDERING STAR #12 Last Issue!			

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July 1995...

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NAME: SARA ANNE WOOD
D.O.B.: March 4, 1981
HEIGHT: 5'0" WEIGHT: 96#
I.D. MARKS: None at time of disappearance.

EYE COLOR: Blue HAIR: Dark Brown/Wavey/Shoulder Length
DATE MISSING: August 18, 1993
MISSING FROM: Litchfield, New York
REPORT TYPE: Criminal Abduction
L.E.A.: New York State Police
Utica, NY PHONE: (315)736-0121

DETAILS OF DISAPPEARANCE: Sara was last seen at 2:30 PM riding her bicycle from the Norwich Corners Church, Roberts Road and Graffenburg Road in Litchfield, New York. Sara was on her way home, however, she never arrived there; her bicycle, coloring books and crayons were found hidden in the brush off Hacadam Road in Litchfield, New York, approximately 0.5 miles past her house. A small "grayish" car was seen slowing down near Sara and turning down Hacadam Road. The car was driven by a white-haired person, with two passengers. When last seen Sara was wearing a pink T-shirt with the words "GUESS WHO" embroidered on the front in the same pink color; turquoise blue shorts and brown sandals. Any person having any information regarding the disappearance of Sara Anne Wood, or knowledge of her possible whereabouts, is asked to PLEASE contact the New York State Police, Utica, New York, or the Missing Children...HELP Center.

NCIC #M-667710894

Missing Children HELP Center

410 Ware Boulevard, Suite 400 • Tampa, Florida 33619 • (813) 623-KIDS • 1-800-USA-KIDS (Outside Florida)

NAME: ALLYSSA MICHELLE PRITCHARD
D.O.B.: June 1, 1979
HEIGHT: 5'5" - 5'6" WEIGHT: 120#
I.D. MARKS: Small rose tattoo on right ankle; large unicorn tattoo on side of left hip; appendectomy scar.

EYE COLOR: Blue HAIR: Blond/Straight
DATE MISSING: October 1, 1993
MISSING FROM: Hutchins, Texas
REPORT TYPE: Missing Juvenile
L.E.A.: Hutchins Police Department
Hutchins, TX PHONE: (214)225-2225

DETAILS OF DISAPPEARANCE Allyssa has a history of running away. She had just returned home on 9/29/93, and left again on 10/1/93. She may be in the company of a 22-year-old and a 24-year-old - gender unknown. She may be wearing wire-rimmed glasses. Any person having any information regarding the disappearance of Allyssa Michelle Pritchard, or knowledge of her possible whereabouts, is asked to PLEASE contact the Hutchins Police Department, Hutchins, Texas, or the Missing Children...HELP Center.

NCIC #M-678843425